State of California

Memorandum

To : Frank Wernette

Date May 27, 1997

From : Department of Fish and Game

Subject : Review of Phase II CALFED Alternative Descriptions

Here are a few comments on some aspects of the CALFED alternatives. This is based on a "cursory review" and is by no means comprehensive. I found the array of alternatives and their configurations to be mind boggling!

1. Increased water storage (common to some configurations of all 3 Alternatives) -- It appears that, at most, one-third of new storage is allocated to fish and wildlife. Based on the recent emphasis on ESA listed species and CALFED priorities, it seems likely that this one-third would be mostly spent on outflow in late winter/early spring. It also seems likely that much of the remaining two-thirds will be exported during other periods (summer/fall). This will result in further detriment to striped bass and other species that rely on the delta as a nursery (greater % of inflow being exported and greater amounts being exported). It seems likely that many species would be better off without the increased storage even if one-third of it is allocated to fish and wildlife.

   Also, there should be a stipulation (guarantee) that the water allocated to fish and wildlife will not be exported! Otherwise, it's likely to become "paper water" such as the CVPIA 800,000 AF.

2. Alternative 1 configurations - Continued conveyance of large amounts of water through the delta will result in continued losses of large numbers of fish.

3. Alternative 2 configurations - The 10,000 cfs canal that routes water from Hood through Snodgrass Slough would be an environmental disaster! The Snodgrass Slough complex is a unique, relatively pristine area with significant wildlife, warmwater fish, and aesthetic values that should not be altered by running anything close to 10,000 cfs through it, not to mention the associated channel "improvements" that undoubtedly would be part of the scheme. If a canal is to be built, it should be routed to the east of Snodgrass Slough and back to the Mokelumne River south of New Hope Landing.

   What happens to the Delta Cross Channel under Alternative 2? Is it opened or closed? Do we end up screening salmon at Hood and then have them pass through the cross channel anyway?

A new screened 10,000 cfs canal at Hood probably will be detrimental to Sacramento River salmon (more so than the present system) due to losses associated with predation at the screens and whatever bypass systems have to be set up to pass upstream migrant adults and screened smolts. When one considers this potential problem on top of continued losses of juvenile fish associated with continued pumping large amounts of water from the delta, Alternative 2 doesn't seem very "fish friendly".

Regarding the isolated conveyance channels in 2C, while they may provide flexibility, they may also just move the diversion problem geographically. On the other hand, experimentation after they were constructed and operated may help decide which to use to reduce impacts. A problem obviously is that the money would have to be spent for construction before we would know if there really were significant benefits.

4. Alternative 3 configurations - The northern 15,000 cfs isolated facility (with adequate flows downstream from it) has the greatest potential to improve the delta (although perhaps with greater losses of Sacramento River salmon than at present). However, with a 15,000 cfs isolated facility(Alternative 3E), why is it necessary to widen the Mokelumne River?

   The lack of exports from the delta from April to June associated with a 5,000 cfs isolated facility (3A) would be a plus, but much of the "good" for delta fish is likely to be undone by large delta diversions at other times. Overall though, this is probably better than status quo.

   Using the deepwater channel (3G) doesn't make as much sense for fish as an east side isolated facility due to the need to transport water through the West Delta to the pumps.

Don

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